

Monkey around in N.H.

WATERVILLE VALLEY, N.H. — In books, Curious George left the jungle, traveled in a boat, escaped from jail, rode a bike, went to the hospital, flew a kite, took a job and got a medal.

But you could say that the lovable little monkey spent his summers in Waterville Valley, N.H. That's where his creators, Margret and H.A. Rey, vacationed.

The Reys first published "Curious George" while living in Manhattan and later moved their primary residence to Cambridge. But H.A. Rey — whose first name was Hans — also wanted to be someplace where he could see the stars at night without city lights, because he was revising his popular astronomy book, "The Stars: A New Way to See Them."

The Reys bought their New Hampshire property in the late 1950s. Today fans can visit the house the Reys lived in — now called the Curious George Cottage, located on Noon Peak Road in Waterville Valley. Along with the Rey Center, located in the village's Town Square, the centers sponsor nature walks, writers' workshops, a lecture series, art shows and activities for children, including outings in the White Mountain National Forest and stargazing.

The Rey Center will soon break ground on a new home with an observatory and a telescope to continue Rey's interest in making astronomy accessible to the public.

Fewer than 400 people live in Waterville Valley year-round, but it offers visitors all sorts of outdoor activities, from hiking and biking to water sports on Corcoran's Pond and tennis. The town hosts a bluegrass festival July 21 and a "Chocolate and Jazz" event the evening of Aug. 4. The village is located about 130 miles from Boston. For more information, go to www.visitwatervillevalley.com or call 800-468-2553.

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